UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Production and Marketing Administration
State College, New Mexico

NEW MEXICO

1-2-48
No. 275

WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

CONSERVATION COMMITTEES TAKE OFFICE JAN. 1 - Farmers elected as county and community committeemen during the past 2 months, will take office January 1, 1948, according to C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico PMA Committee.

In some instances this will mean new chairmen and new committeemen, but many committeemen have been re-elected.

The chairman explains that on the shoulders of these elected committees rests a large share of the soil- and water-conservation responsibility of the Nation. The committeemen are faced with the problem of helping farmers use the programs to continue high production to meet the increased food demand on this country, and to keep to a minimum the losses from erosion.

In the past 25 years, he states, increased population and erosion have reduced the amount of cropland for each person in the country from 3¼ acres to 2½ acres. More than a half-million acres of good land is being lost each year from erosion. But through the Agricultural Conservation Program the Nation is cooperating with farmers in protecting the land.

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CONSERVATION CHEAPEST SAYS DAVIDSON - Conservation of soil and water is the least expensive thing we can do. Dave Davidson, Assistant Administrator for Production in PMA, told State PMA Committeemen and PMA officials at the first national PMA conference, which was held at Colorado Springs early in the month.

Mr. Davidson, former PMA Chairman in California, pointed out that if we are to maintain abundant production, conservation of the Nation's soil and water resources is absolutely necessary. Abundant production cannot be maintained without it. Delay will mean increased erosion and depletion and increased costs to correct the damage if it can be done at all. Plainly the job will grow each day and it's cheaper to do it now than to let it go. It will cost much

less to have an active, vigorous program in operation now, than to defer the work until some future time.

Discussing reasons why the program is necessary, he pointed out that many farmers cannot afford to carry out conservation practices -- "they simply do not have the means to do it." A large part of our land is operated by tenants and too often there is more concern with immediate returns than long-time protection of the soil.

But, Mr. Davidson said, perhaps the best reason why payments are needed is the urgency of conservation. "The Nation cannot afford to wait. The loss of soil and water resources would be too great. The cost in terms of reduced production and resulting increased prices would be too great."

Mr. Davidson added that the key to the successful operation of the program rests with the farmer committees, democratically elected by their fellows. He urged State, county, and community committees to do the best conservation job possible with the facilities available.

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FARM PROGRAM CHANGES RECOMMENDED AT PMA CONFERENCE - State Production and Marketing Administration committeemen, representing 48 states at a recent meeting at Colorado Springs, Col., made a number of recommendations regarding the Nation's Agricultural Conservation Program, reports C. V. Hemphill, State PMA Chairman. Many of the suggestions are in line with long-range farm program proposals recently submitted to Congress by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Recommendations made at the meeting include:

That all programs for soil and water conservation including technical assistance and services to farmers be under the direction of farmer-elected committees.

That county committeemen be elected for a term of 3 years, and that terms of office be so arranged that only part of the positions become vacant each year. That community committeemen be elected for a term of one year. (Both county and community committeemen are elected for one year now.)

That all farmers including landlords, tenants and share-croppers having an interest in a farm in a community be eligible to vote in the selection of community committeemen regardless of whether or not they participate in programs administered by the committees.

That all community committeemen be eligible to vote in the election of county committeemen. A majority of the community committeemen shall be represented at the county convention. (Under the present law, county committeemen are elected by delegates to a county convention. These delegates are elected at the community elections where the community committeemen are voted in.)

That all agricultural agencies in a county be housed in one location — or one office.

Objectives of the farm program were given as: (1) Maintenance of an economic position for farmers equal to that enjoyed by other American enterprises — in other words "an even break"; (2) preservation of our land and water resources to insure a permanent, self-revitalizing agriculture; (3) vestment of administration of agricultural policies and programs firmly in the hands of farmers themselves; and (4) abundant production in balance with needs, selling at prices fair to both producers and consumers.

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LESS MEAT IN '48 IS OUTLOOK - Here's the outlook for the 1948 meat supply as seen by the U. S. Department of Agriculture:

***Meat output in each quarter of 1948 is expected to be smaller than in the corresponding quarters of 1947. During the first 9 months, most of the reduction will be in beef; in the last quarter, output of both beef and pork will be lower.

***The number of hogs slaughtered in the first 9 months of 1948 probably will be about the same as a year earlier. But hogs are likely to be marketed at much lighter weights than in the past 4 or 5 years because of reduced feed supplies and high feed prices. This will mean a larger reduction in output of fat cuts than in output of lean pork. With a smaller spring pig crop, fewer hogs will be slaughtered in the late fall and winter of 1948-49.

***The sharp decline in the number of cattle on farms this year and reduced grain feeding probably will result in a smaller cattle slaughter in 1948 than in 1947. Sheep and lamb slaughter also will be smaller. Fewer sheep and lambs will be fed this winter and there will be a smaller lamb crop next year.

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WORLD BARLEY, OATS CROPS REDUCED - World production of barley and oats in 1947 is now indicated at about 2.2 and 3.8 billion bushels, respectively, according to estimates of the Department of Agriculture. At these levels, barley production would be a little larger and oats production slightly smaller than in 1946. Both crops are well below the 1935-39 average.

Declines from prewar levels are especially marked in Continental Europe and the Soviet Union, with smaller declines expected in Africa and Asia. Crops of both grains were substantially above average in North America, as they are expected to be in South America and Australia.

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CONSUMERS ASKED TO SHARE AVAILABLE FOOD - "The plain facts are that the food emergency will continue at least until the next harvest," says a statement released by the Cabinet Food Committee, which the President has directed to carry forward and intensify the Voluntary Food Conservation Program. "The need for grain overseas will be urgent at least until that time...

"Even though certain foods may be in short supply, these shortages need not cause inflationary price rises. There is enough for everyone, if we all share what is available. If each family does its part in faithfully living up to voluntary food conservation, runaway prices can be avoided."

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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No. 276

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FARMERS ROUND OUT FULL CONSERVATION PROGRAM - The end of 1947 finds the Nation a little stronger in one of its basic national defenses than it was at the beginning of the year, declares W. Leslie Martin, Member of the New Mexico PMA Committee. He explains that the very foundation of any defense program rests on the land — the soil from which comes the Nation's food in peace or war.

He calls attention to the strong position of the United States in World War II because of adequate supplies of food. Farm production was increased a third over pre-war production.

New Mexico farmers who cooperated in the 1947 Agricultural Conservation Program have strengthened the Nation's position in food production. These farmers have carried out conservation practices on their own farms which have saved soil and put the land in better shape for future food production.

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IRRIGATION PRACTICES CONTINUED UNDER 1948 ACP - In the western half of the United States, for successful farming, soil and water go together, according to Santiago Marquez, New Mexico PMA Committeeman. Rainfall during the growing season is not adequate nor does it come at the right time to grow farm crops. Through irrigation the land can be made to yield abundantly.

But, he continues, unless properly handled, this same irrigation water can destroy the land it made productive. Through the use of too much water in the spring of the year when the snows in the mountains are melting and the streams overflowing, land is being washed away in some instances and waterlogged in others.

It is because of this close relationship between land and water that irrigation practices are included in the Agricultural Conservation Program.

Following are practices cited by the committeeman which are offered again under the 1948 Agricultural Conservation Program.

Assistance will be given for reorganization of the irrigation system to obtain more efficient use of water and to reduce erosion. Under this general practice, the cooperating farmer may enlarge or construct permanent irrigation ditches, line canals and ditches, construct or install flumes, syphons, drop boxes, weirs, diversion gates, and pipe. Land-leveling again is in the program. So also are the construction of small irrigation dams and enlarging existing reservoirs.

Through these irrigation practices, erosion of soil is reduced, more efficient use of water obtained, and the land thus made more productive.

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FERTILIZER INCREASES PASTURE PRODUCTION - "Fertilization of pastures produces more feed for livestock, as the many farmers know who have applied lime, phosphate, and other fertilizers under the agricultural conservation program in the last few years," said A. D. Woofter, New Mexico PMA Committeeman, in discussing the plans farmers are now drawing up for their conservation work in 1948. "But," he continued, "some farmers wonder how much extra production they get."

To answer the question he cites results of tests in Connecticut over a 10-year period: Fertilizer encouraged bluegrass, white clover and other good pasture plants, and discouraged the bad ones, such as poverty grass. White clover occupied only about 10 percent of the ground of the pasture plots which did not get phosphate, but over 50 percent of the land to which phosphate had been applied. Bluegrass furnished about 70 percent of the feed from the fertilized plots and only about 1 percent from the plots that were not fertilized.

Mr. Woofter explains that increasing the producing capacity of pastures fits into the current demand for food as well as the long-time plans of farmers.

Fertilized pastures furnish a greater proportion of feed for livestock, leaving more grain for human food. Later, when the demand for grain for export is reduced, farmers will continue to have high-producing pastures as cheap feed for their livestock. Best of all, during the whole time, the dense pastures will hold the soils and increase their fertility.

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TRIPLE AID - The dam built on the Hopkin Ranch in Rich County, Utah, was only one of 112,000 dams built under the 1946 Agricultural Conservation Program, but this particular dam does three major jobs:

1. As an erosion control dam it stops the silt-laden waters from melting snow on surrounding hills from cutting deep gullies through valuable farm land below. This water no longer joins with other streams to become a destructive flood in the lower valley.

2. As an irrigation dam it holds back the water during the flush spring runoff for use later on in the summer when water from other sources is scarce. The even flow of water during the entire growing season, instead of for only about six weeks in the spring, results in more hay, grain and potatoes.

3. As a stock-water dam it permits a more even distribution of livestock on the range. Animals no longer have to trail long distances to get a drink. With more watering places there is less of the overgrazing that results when watering places are few and far between. Livestock put on more economical gains. Less trampling and overgrazing means less erosion. There is more vegetation to check the rain and melting snow — the water remains on the land instead of rushing off and taking the soil with it.

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SMALLER SPRING PIG CROP EXPECTED - Farmers intend to farrow 7,732,000 sows next spring — about 11 percent fewer than in 1947, the Department of Agriculture

reports. This would be 8 percent below the 10-year average and the smallest number of spring farrowings since 1938. If these intentions are carried out and the number of pigs saved per litter is about the same as the 10-year average, the 1948 spring pig crop would be about 48 million head, 9 percent smaller than in 1947.

This estimate is based on breeding intentions reported by farmers about December 1, taking into consideration the relationship of intentions to actual farrowing in other years of high hog prices and below average corn supplies.

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Production and Marketing Administration
NEW MEXICO State College, New Mexico 1-16-48
No. 277

WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

EROSION IN THE GROCERY STORE - If the local grocery store were to cave in, sending cans, jars, boxes, and sacks of food swirling down the river the people depending on that store for food would really get excited about it. But when the soil which produces the food goes down the river it is taken as a matter of course.

News of a carload of potatoes going bad or several hundred cases of eggs spoiling makes the headlines. But, when potential production goes under the bridge in the way of eroded soil it is viewed as just so much muddy water.

If, in the flood swollen river, we could see barrels of flour, cases of eggs, truckloads of canned vegetables and fruits, and carloads of potatoes, beans, corn, milk, beef, butter, apples, and strawberries instead of so much muddy water more people would understand what is taking place in this country.

Experts estimate that when the Pilgrim fathers landed in this country we had an average of 9 inches of topsoil. Now there are only 6 inches. It is startling to estimate the amount of food this lost 3 inches of topsoil represents. More startling is the thought of what will happen if with population increasing, we lose another 3 inches of topsoil.

To check soil losses and insure continued production is the reason for the Agricultural Conservation Program.

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PEANUT MARKETING QUOTAS TERMINATED - Marketing quotas on the 1948 crop of peanuts were terminated because of the world shortage of foods, fats, and oils. Under marketing quotas, plantings in 1948 would have been about

2,359,000 acres, compared with about 3,378,000 acres harvested for nuts in 1947. The 1948 acreage allotment would have been about 30 percent less than the average acreage harvested for nuts in the period 1942-46.

Since peanut growers voting in a December 9 referendum approved quotas for 3 years the quota machinery will be available in 1949 and 1950 if needed. Official returns of the December 9 referendum show that 92,136 peanut producers, or 87.7 percent of those voting, favored quotas.

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LIMITS PUT ON GRAIN USE BY DISTILLERS - An emergency food order will limit total use of grain by distillers to about 2,450,000 bushels for the period ending January 31, 1948. The order was issued by the Department of Agriculture in accordance with recently enacted legislation permitting such action.

No wheat will be included in the processing quotas, which have been computed for each distilling plant. Any grain used by a plant during the recent voluntary holiday to conserve grain will be deducted from the total the plant is authorized to use during December 1947 through January 1948. This will equalize the burden between the plants which complied fully with the voluntary program and the few plants which failed to comply.

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PHOSPHATE IN ROTATIONS INCREASES CROP YIELDS - About 200 Minnesota farmers have carried out an experiment in applying phosphate at a certain time in rotation rather than every year. These farmers found that, by applying the phosphate needed for corn, oats, and alfalfa, to the alfalfa in the rotation, better yields were obtained, thus saving the labor of annual applications. In rotations other than corn, oats; and alfalfa, the phosphate was applied to the grass or legumes in the rotation. In the course of the first 6 years, this method of applying phosphate has increased the yield of oats 5.6 bushels; of barley, 4.5; of wheat, 2.9; of corn, 6.1; and of alfalfa, 1 ton.

Not only did the application of phosphate increase the amount of alfalfa hay, it improved its quality. Analysis showed the hay thus treated had 47 pounds more protein per ton than the alfalfa that had not been treated with phosphate.

In the area where these demonstrations have been carried out, the soil was so short of phosphorus that cattle chewed bones. They don't do that any more. One farmer expressed the opinion that 4 loads of corn from treated land equaled 5 loads from non-phosphated land.

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FAT SALVAGE REWARDING CONSERVATION - Under today's conditions, neither individuals nor the nation can afford any waste of vital war materials. The United States' economy alone has to support some thirteen million more individuals than in 1939 and, in addition, we have undertaken a tremendous assignment for foreign relief. Waste imperils our purposes, both at home and abroad.

Fat salvage is one of the easiest and most-rewarding forms of conservation. The homemaker who saves and turns in her used fats, after she has got the cooking good from them, makes an important contribution to the welfare of her country and of the world. She deprives herself of nothing. She cuts down on plumbers' bills and, finally, she gets well paid for the used fats that she turns in to her retail meat dealer. While there have been fluctuations in the prices of used fats, most dealers today pay substantially more than they did during the war or even than they paid last summer.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

HOW MUCH SOIL HAVE YOU LOST? - "How much longer will your farm last?" asks C. V. Hemphill, New Mexico PMA Chairman.

Explaining this challenging question, Mr. Hemphill said that when farms were broken out of the native vegetation there was a store of fertility in reserve. In some instances the reserve was rather small; in other instances there was a rather large reserve of minerals needed for plant growth. Crops have taken some of that reserve but a far larger amount in most cases has been washed away or blown away. The chairman points out that unless something is done to restore these losses, sooner or later the land fails to produce because of the lack of one or more of the necessary minerals.

When the reserves of one of these essential minerals runs out crop yields drop off. An abundance of calcium won't make up for a lack of phosphate. In most instances these minerals support each other in promoting plant growth, the chairman explains.

Erosion and heavy production of cash crops have taken a serious toll from our land. A recent study in an important agricultural county reveals that 20 percent of the top-soil had been lost in 33 years of farming. The total amount of top-soil lost in this one county amounted to 31,728 acres based on an average of 7 inches of top-soil over the area. Putting it another way, enough soil was lost to cover an area of 31,728 acres 7 inches deep.

Studies in this State indicate that loss of top-soil here also has been serious. More serious on some farms than others, the Chairman said. These studies and the evidences we have all around us should make each of us who farm ask, "How much soil have I lost and how much longer will my farm last?" He

points out that the Agricultural Conservation Program is in operation to help farmers check these losses.

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EROSION EARLY RECOGNIZED AS MENACE- "Now that more and more people recognize that erosion is destroying the food-producing plants of the country, more is being done about conservation in this country," said C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico PMA Committee, discussing conservation plans which farmers intend to carry out this year.

"Erosion damage has been recognized for a long time by a few people. But, up to a relatively few years ago, little was done to prevent it. One interesting example of an early observation is that of Solon Robinson at a meeting of the Farmers' Club in New York in July 1854. Robinson is reported to have said:

"Travel through all the Southern States, and you will see millions of acres that have been ruined. The land has been washed away by the system of plowing up and down hill, till waters that were once navigable have been filled and changed to dry land. We should devise a system of tillage that will prevent the land from washing away. It should be a rule in all hilly countries that every slope should always be plowed level -- no matter how long or how crooked the rows are."

Recognizing the need and doing something about it are two different things, the State Chairman said. "Seeing the gullied hills and even talking about them," he pointed out, "doesn't keep more farms from being cut up by erosion. It wasn't until the farmers had their own Agricultural Conservation Program that conservation work got out on the farms in a big way to actually stop erosion. Even today, we are still losing ground."

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DIVIDENDS FROM CONSERVATION - "More food, better food, and the assurance of continued abundant production," is the answer to the question "What do I get out of the money spent to help farmers conserve their soil?" says C. V. Hemphill, Chairman of the New Mexico PMA Committee.

"As farmer committeemen -- State, county, and community -- we have been given the responsibility of administering a program which aids in protecting the Nation's farmland from erosion and depletion. But at the same time we have been given the job of assisting in making that land more productive so that the food needs of an increasing population can be met and the nation can meet commitments to destitute countries overseas.

"The commitments are being met and that the people in this country are able to eat 18 percent more food per person than before the war is evidence that these farmer committees are functioning and the programs we administer are effective.

"Certainly we don't give all the credit to the Agricultural Conservation Program for the 40 percent increase in farm production over pre-war, but the conservation practices carried out by farmers cooperating in the program have been a major factor in obtaining this increase. This conservation farming along with favorable weather, improved strains of corn, wheat and potatoes, and other crops, has produced the results."

Examples of how conservation farming has increased yields and improved farms are "too numerous to list," says the Chairman but he cites the following example:

Arthur Sharp of South China, Kennebec County, Maine, bought a farm 10 years ago that he said wouldn't support his two cows and one horse. Now this same farm -- with no additional acreage -- supports a herd of 33 Guernsey cows and 3 horses. Conservation farming, the use of lime and other materials, in

building up cropland and pastures which in turn prevent erosion and depletion is the reason. Examples like this repeated time and time again in each state and in each county add up to the 40 percent increase in food production. As a result per capita consumption of food is up 18 percent from pre-war and at the same time material quantities are going overseas to help rehabilitate European countries.

"This is what the people of this country are getting for the money spent to help farmers carry out lasting conservation practices," says the State Chairman. "Also, while it may seem impossible to estimate, I wonder what food prices would be if we hadn't had tremendous production in recent years."

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Production and Marketing Administration
State College, New Mexico

NEW MEXICO 1-30-48
No. 279

WEEKLY FARM PROGRAM NEWS

LAUNCH 1948 AAA PROGRAM - The State PMA Committee, assisted by members of the State Office staff, is conducting a series of district meetings with County ACA Committeemen and Secretaries, according to C. V. Hemphill, PMA Chairman of the State Committee.

"At these meetings, County Committeemen will discuss ways and means of obtaining the greatest possible amount of conservation with the limited funds available for 1948," Mr. Hemphill said. "Only about a million dollars have been allotted to New Mexico for 1948 conservation payments which is less than half the amount made available for 1947," he stated.

"In 1947 farmers and ranchers in New Mexico actually earned over three million dollars in performance of conservation practices but will receive payment for only approximately two thirds of this amount," Mr. Hemphill continued.

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SECRETARY ANDERSON STRESSES FARM PROGRAM NEED - Planning for the long view in agriculture will be neither easy nor unopposed, Secretary of Agriculture Clinton P. Anderson recently warned farmers. But, he pointed to the Department's recent testimony to Congress on long-range policy, to indicate that agriculture at last has a chance of developing a permanent policy that will make the land safe and provide at the same time a healthy abundance.

Speaking about the Triple-A program, Secretary Anderson said:

"I would certainly admit that Triple-A was, in the beginning, primarily an effort to improve the farmer's economic position. I do not know why anybody should be expected to apologize for that. But I am certain that its conservation activities have been administered, at all levels, with a sincere conviction of the importance of conservation. Otherwise, I doubt that the

thousands of committeemen — who are independent farm operators — would continue to sacrifice their time for less than they have to pay a hired man in order to serve their neighbors in operating the program.

"Think back to the days before 1933. What was happening to the wheat lands.....in the wheat belt of the Great Plains? Duststorms of appalling magnitude... Think now of the millions and millions of bushels of wheat harvested from those same lands during the past 5 years.... Nature helped, of course. Those very dry years passed. But production was aided by conservation practices.... I believe, and the Department of Agriculture believes, that the Agricultural Conservation Program deserves a lot of credit for introducing conservation farming in the area.

"Any precise estimate of the amount of conservation progress in this country that owes itself to the financial assistance given under the ACP is, of course, open to debate... I would venture the opinion, however, that..... it would be nearer right to say that the country got back at least a dollar for every ten cents it put out on the ACP.

".... our land has been under great pressure for the better part of a decade. It has lost a lot of fertility, not because farmers were careless, but because of the demand for food and fiber year after year. Farmers have used their land unsparingly for the benefit of the nation. I believe that the nation has a responsibility to help restore that lost fertility. I am convinced that no better investment of public money can be made than an investment that safeguards our most important natural resource....

The committee system, wherein the practical experience of leading farmers in the community is combined with the technical knowledge of the Land Grant Colleges and of the USDA in the formulation and operation of action programs, has proven to be a most flexible and efficient way of mobilizing agricultural

resources and bringing them to bear on any enemy, be it waste, want, wind, or weather.

"By holding firmly to the progress made in the past 15 years, agriculture will be better able to use its present advantageous position to plan for the future."

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ATOMIC ENERGY TO AID FARMERS - Atomic energy which exploded the hopes of warlords and helped to end the war may soon be harnessed to help farmers produce the food needed for a more abundant life in a peacetime world, says W. Leslie Martin, Member of the N. M. PMA Committee.

He points out that atomic scientists already are pointing to developments which may lead to a number of advances in the use of phosphate. Since the application of phosphate is a conservation practice under the Agricultural Conservation Program, the use of atomic energy in determining the response of plants to the use of phosphate may have much to do with the planning of future conservation programs.

During the coming year soil scientists are planning to use radio active phosphate to study the response to the use of phosphate fertilizers on pastures, sugar beets, soy beans and corn, Martin reports. Radioactive phosphorus turned out at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, already has been used to measure accurately the relative amounts of native and applied phosphate absorbed by the various crops at different stages of growth.

Tests of radioactive phosphorus on legumes and grasses will help in determining conservation needs in the future.

The real conservation value of phosphate is in the increased growth of legumes and grasses which results from the application of phosphate and for that reason the reported prospects have a significance for future conservation practices, Martin explains.

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2,4-D PROMISES TO CONTROL SAGEBRUSH - Recent reports indicate that 2,4-D offers promise in controlling some of the brushy plants that infest range land, according to A. D. Woofter, Member of the State PMA Committee.

Tests conducted during the last two summers in the Texas panhandle and in nearby Woodward, Oklahoma, have indicated that a spray made up of 2,4-D, soda, diesel oil, and water applied by airplane will kill sand sage, skunkbush and sandplum.

Stockmen have been so impressed with the results that they have arranged to have about 30,000 acres sprayed this coming spring at a cost of about $2 an acre.

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